CLAIMS

I claim:

1. In a system comprising an e-mail server and a plurality of computers connected to the server, a method for transmitting an e-mail message received by the server to one of the plurality of computers, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving the e-mail message in the server;

storing the e-mail message in a mailbox corresponding to a user-name;

incrementing a counter representative of the number of e-mail messages which are stored in the mailbox;

determining if an e-mail client corresponding to the user-name has formed a connection between the one of the plurality of computers and the server;

transmitting the e-mail message to the one of the computers if the connection has been formed; and

deleting the e-mail message from the mailbox and decrementing the counter after the e-mail message has been transmitted.

2. The method according to claim 1, further including the step of scanning the e-mail message stored in the mailbox to determine if a text string within the e-mail message meets a predetermined outcome criteria.

3. The method according to claim 2, wherein the text string comprises a "from" address.

4. The method according to claim 2, wherein the text string includes a "from" address and a text string other than the "from" address.

5. The method according to claim 2, wherein the text string includes a "from" address and an "urgent" flag.

6. The method according to claim 2, further including the step of causing a predetermined outcome if the text string meets the outcome criteria.

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7.   The method according to claim 6, wherein the outcome comprises activating an annunciator.

8.   The method according to claim 6, wherein the outcome comprises forwarding the message to an addressee.

9.   The method according to claim 6, further including the step of the server receiving a description of the outcome criteria and the outcome from the one of the plurality of computers.

10.   An apparatus for receiving an e-mail message and transmitting the e-mail message to one of a plurality of computers comprising:

        a memory having at least one region for storing computer executable program code; and

        a processor for executing the program code stored in said memory, wherein the program code includes code for receiving the e-mail message, storing the e-mail message in a mailbox corresponding to a user-name, incrementing a counter representative of the number of e-mail messages which are stored in the mailbox, determining if an e-mail client corresponding to the user-name has formed a connection between the one of the plurality of computers and the server, transmitting the e-mail message to the one of the computers if the connection has been formed, and thereafter, deleting the e-mail message from the mailbox and decrementing the counter.

11.   The apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the program code further includes code for scanning the e-mail message stored in the mailbox to determine if a text string within the e-mail message meets a predetermined outcome criteria.

12   The apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the program code further includes code for executing a predetermined outcome if the e-mail message meets the outcome criteria.

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13. The apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the program code further includes code for activating an annunciator if the e-mail message meets the predetermined outcome criteria.

14. The apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the program code further includes code for transmitting the e-mail message to a forwarding address if the e-mail message meets the outcome criteria.

15. A method for interacting with a client computer and setting outcome criteria and outcome instructions in an e-mail server connected to the client computer, the method comprising:

logging in to the e-mail server with a user-name;

receiving a configuration page from the e-mail server;

entering the outcome criteria into the configuration page;

entering the outcome instructions into the configuration page; and

submitting the configuration page to the e-mail server.

16. A method according to claim 15, wherein the outcome criteria comprises a "from" address.

17. A method according to claim 15, wherein the outcome criteria includes a text string.

18. A method according to claim 15, wherein the outcome criteria includes an "urgent" flag.

19. A method according to claim 15, wherein the outcome instructions include instructions for activating an annunciator.

20. A method according to claim 15, wherein the outcome instructions include the address of an addressee for receiving the e-mail message.